

Standard for Food and Drink Process Operator

Section 1: Occupational Profile

Food and Drink Process Operators work in one of the largest, most dynamic and fastest growing sectors of industry. Every day, producers, manufacturers and retailers make and sell millions of innovative food products to consumers in the UK and around the world. This includes drinks, cakes, biscuits, ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook food, sandwiches, wraps, fresh fruit and salads. It is imperative that Process Operators in the industry have the skills and knowledge to ensure our food products, which millions of people consume every day, are safe.

Process Operators work in the manufacturing sector of the food and drink industry. They may be employed in a company that specialises one type of product, eg ready meals, soft drinks or confectionary, or in a company that makes a wide range of different products. Process Operators typically work on production lines within food manufacturing plants. The industry uses excellent manufacturing processes and highly automated equipment and technology to ensure it remains competitive, and produces food and drink products to strict food safety and quality standards.

On completion of this programme, Process Operators will be able to carry out production operations using a range of equipment, and will be able to carry out basic fault finding on the equipment they work with. They will be able to handle food products safely and hygienically. They will be able to follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to maintain quality and to ensure products meet customer requirements.

Following completion of the programme, individuals will have developed an understanding of continuous improvement processes used in the industry, and will know when it is appropriate to escalate technical issues to a specialist or more senior member of staff. They will understand food safety and its importance to the industry. They will be effective communicators who are able to work well with others. They will have a solid grounding in most aspects of food production and manufacturing and have a good level of product knowledge.

Section 2: The Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

Food and Drink Process Operators will have the following knowledge and understanding:

Knowledge

- The need for and principles of quality management
- Environmental Management System requirements
- The Food and Drink sector: businesses and principles within it
- Product origin and end-to-end supply chain
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Hygiene standards and food safety
- Health and Safety in the food industry
- Products: how to handle products and the effects of external influences on them
- The Operator's role: how it fits into the wider business and adds customer and consumer value
- Effective communication skills and team working
- How to use relevant tools and equipment in food production
- The principles of Continuous Improvement (CI) in the food production industry
- Good manufacturing practice in the food industry
- Performance data: understanding, interpreting and acting on it

Food and Drink Process Operators will demonstrate the following skills:

Skills

- Follow and implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and work with the quality process as appropriate
- Carry out basic fault finding and problem solving; take action according to organisational procedures
- Ensure effective handovers to appropriate colleagues
- Clean equipment according to specifications and schedules
- Ensure personal compliance with regulatory and company Quality, Food Safety, Environmental, and Health and Safety requirements
- Actively contribute to optimal production performance, eg line optimisation in the control of yields/stock levels
- Identify Health and Safety, Food Safety, Hygiene and Quality issues where appropriate and escalate
- Contribute to effective changeovers
- Monitor product quality and identify and communicate opportunities for improvement
- Contribute to Continuous Improvement (CI) activities
- Interpret, record and act upon performance indicator data
- Engage in HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) monitoring and controls

Food and Drink Process Operators will demonstrate the following behaviours:

Behaviours

- Safe working: ensures safety of self and others, food safe, challenges safety issues
- Ownership of work: accepts responsibility and is proactive
- Pride in work: aims for excellence, punctual and reliable, has 'first time right' attitude
- Self-development: seeks learning and development opportunities
- Integrity and respect: respect for colleagues, customers, products and equipment
- Working in a team: builds good relationships with others
- Problem solving: participates in problem solving
- Responsiveness to change: flexibility to changing working environment and demands
- Company/industry perspective: desire to learn about the company and food industry, acts as an ambassador
- Effective communication: with others, listens effectively, gives and receives feedback
- Demonstrates and encourages curiosity to foster new ways of thinking and working

Section 3: Additional Information

Duration	Typical duration 18-24 months for new entrants
Entry Requirements	Employers will set their own criteria, but typically an entrant to this apprenticeship will already have achieved a minimum of Entry Level 3 in English and maths
Level	Level 2
Qualification	Apprentices are required to complete a Level 2 Diploma in Food and Drink Operations qualification prior to taking the end-point assessment for the apprenticeship
Standard Review	After 3 years
English and Maths	Apprentices without level 1 English and maths will need to achieve this level, and take the test for level 2 English and maths prior to taking the end-point assessment for this apprenticeship

